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specimen of the value of Assyriology for Hebrew study, the latter is chiefly of sociological interest. The derivation of גג 'roof,' also, is obscure; apparently the Hebrews were indebted to a foreign race for the terms, though presumably not the appurtenances, of town and house-life. The subject is one that might be profitably pursued.

S. A. COOK.

J. W. THIRTLE'S "TITLES OF THE PSALMS."

The Titles of the Psalms: their Nature and Meaning explained: by JAMES WILLIAM THIRTLE. (London, &c., Henry Frowde.)

THIS book embodies a new theory respecting the titles of the Psalms. Hitherto—drastic emendations apart—general opinion has acquiesced perforce in unsatisfactory explanations, none of which are advocated with fervent conviction. But here is a forcible and convincing presentation of a new point of view, and a fresh discussion of the problems in question follows.

The clue which the writer has discovered is obvious once it is discovered and explained: "In a proper arrangement of the material *the lines at the top of a psalm* should . . . (1) describe the piece, whether a Song, a Psalm, Michtam, &c., (2) state the author . . . (3) set out the circumstances of its composition . . . or the object for which it was written. . . . *Anything not coming within this description belongs to the preceding psalm*" (p. 16). Nor is this merely a happy conjecture, for, as the writer points out, we have in Habakkuk iii a psalm, standing alone, which has a title giving class of the composition, author, and circumstances, while the so-called Musical Title is placed *at the end*.

This original theory then, which postulates no deep-seated corruption of the text and is in itself simple and natural, is definitely supported by good external evidence. Further, when applied, it immediately approves itself—in some cases. Thus, according to the common arrangement, Ps. lxxxviii is attributed by the title to two distinct writers: (1) "A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, (2) Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite" (A.V.). On Mr. Thirtle's theory, (1) is a foot-note to Ps. lxxxvii, giving its liturgical use, and repeating also (cf. Ps. xlvi) the information contained in the title at the beginning, "A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah." Similarly, the title of Ps. xlv gains in point and pertinency if it is attached to Ps. xlv. Thus the praises of "the King's daughter" are fittingly allotted to the choir of Maidens (Alamoth). And in the case of the title of Ps. lvi the connexion of

the first part, "To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rehokim," with the preceding psalm has already been recognized. But it was reserved for Mr. Thirtle to infer from this and the data of Habakkuk iii a general theory which obviously goes far to mitigate the present "Cimmerian darkness" which surrounds these titles, especially the Musical Titles. Subsequent discussion of the problem will probably recognize that this clue is to be followed, but not always, for its universal application has led to fresh difficulties which strain even the ingenuity of its discoverer.

To the statement of the general principle succeeds a discussion of the individual titles regarded in the light of the Psalms to which they are now attached, in accordance with that principle, and elucidated by the application of "KNOWN facts and teachings as distinguished from mere conjectures." The results are interesting and attractive, if not always convincing. Often the "logical relevancy of the subscript title" is neither obvious nor easily established. But in each case an honest attempt is made to elicit the meaning of the words as words and not names of mysterious musical instruments, of imaginary popular songs and tunes, or of peoples, which have been overlaid by the Massoretes and spring into life when the Hebrew Bible, like a palimpsest, is treated with the powerful re-agent of "critical methods."

Gittith, "winepress," naturally suggests the vintage-festival. This meaning is adopted both by the Septuagint and the Vulgate and is certainly preferable to "belonging to Gath." With the new view the three *Winepress* Psalms are vii, lxxx, lxxxiii. Of these Ps. lxxx is obviously appropriate (verses 8 and following): for the connexion of the others with the Feast of Tabernacles we must refer our readers to Mr. Thirtle's book itself. "*Gittith*, *Gittôth* = 'winepresses,' recalls the Feast of Tabernacles, the object of which was to commemorate God's great goodness to Israel in their pilgrimage through the wilderness. . . . The Tabernacles Feast brought to mind that He was their keeper. Hence the Psalms illustrate reliance on God in times of adversity, and that very plainly."

A similar treatment is applied to each of the titles. The natural meaning of the words is first ascertained: then attempts are made to determine the feast or famous event with which this meaning may be naturally associated: finally, the preceding psalm is examined in the light of that association. Thus, for example, *Shoshannim*, "lilies," is identified with the spring-feast Passover, and *Muth-labben* (Ps. viii) is explained with the Targum as "Death of the Champion," i. e. Goliath. And so throughout the titles are explained as marking (1) the reasons for which Psalms were used in public worship,

(2) national commemorations—wherever it is possible to do so. But even in the case of titles which yield no such historical or liturgical reference, the writer is not prepared to resort to the musical instruments or tunes. Such enigmas as *Sheminith* and *Jeduthun* are with *Alamoth* regarded as the names of special choirs to which certain psalms were particularly assigned. A summary would not do justice to the ingenuity with which each new case is presented. The general principle certainly deserves serious consideration. The second half of the book is occupied with the text of “the Psalms according to the Revised Version, with the Titles discriminated and explained.”

J. H. A. HART.

THE SEPTUAGINT IN ENGLISH.

Thomson's Septuagint, by S. F. PELLs, 2 vols., 12s. net. *Hades* by S. F. PELLs, 5s. net. (Skeffington and Son, 1904.)

A NOTE on the title-page of the first volume of this reprint of Thomson's *English Translation of the Septuagint* explains the purpose of its editor, who is also the author of the accompanying volume, which deals with “Hades.” “In publishing this first English Translation of the Septuagint my object is (he says) to call attention to the high estimation in which these Scriptures were once held in the Christian Church for a thousand years; and in hopes of bringing about a return to a more Apostolic faith I have published a work on ‘Hades’ in conjunction with it.” Mottoes taken from Ecclesiasticus follow, and it is unfortunate that this selection has not induced the editor to add a translation of the so-called Apocryphal books. If respect is to be had to primitive Christian usage, it must be admitted that these outcasts once stood as high in general esteem as those books which found themselves on the safe side of the boundary line when the limits of the Hebrew Canon were finally determined and defined. In spite of this, the theory which Jerome taught, but failed to put into practice, is nowadays practised though not always taught; and Mr. Pells can plead common custom in thus issuing a translation of the Septuagint which includes no more than the “Old Testament” as understood by the bookseller and the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is something that this rare English (or American) version of the Septuagint should have been republished. By its means perhaps some of the students of the English Bible may learn that there is such a thing as the Septuagint, even if they do not heed its “written preaching.” But it is deplorable that any one who cares so